Metro

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Story by
CARY
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Jocelyn Sandberg loved music, lived for music. Everyone who knew her has a story to tell about Jocelyn and her CDs, or Jocelyn and her weekly jaunts to concerts in Denver or Boulder. Even those who didn't know her might recall seeing her — perhaps as the doughmaker who used to dance around in Poor Richard's restaurant, where she worked on and off for the past decade, or maybe riding around town on an old Schwinn with a big fat seat, wearing headphones and singing some Joan Armatrading.

Even the final hours of Sandberg's life were filled with music. On the night of April 25, a Thursday, she and a friend had gone to Boulder to see a band.

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Jocelyn frequently got around Colorado Springs via an old Schwinn bike.

Jocelyn and her friend Karen To, in March.

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Jocelyn gestures during a party at her apartment in March.

Sandberg's body was found early the next morning outside Armstrong Hall at Colorado College. It's unclear what sort of altercation led to her stabbing death just a couple blocks from her Dale Street apartment. No arrests have been made, and police are saying little about the investigation.

In the week since the killing, those who knew her best gathered to grieve at her homes away from home: Poor Richard's and KRCC, where she was operations manager and an on-air personality.

They talked of her zest for life. How she was loud at times, sometimes mouthy. About how she also was fair-minded, nonjudgmental. About her honesty, and how she had a knack of speaking her mind without offending. Mario Valdes, her boss at KRCC, describes her as a "human ball of energy" who had a "day life, a twilight life and a night life" that affected and intersected with a variety of people.

On the Sunday after her death, friends, co-workers, her parents and one of her brothers got together at her apartment. Valdes remembers marveling at the collection of people — the differing hair colors, the piercings, tattoos, cowboy hats, the straights and gays.

"If her parents didn't know she was colorful, they gotta know it now," Valdes remembers thinking. "This is as unusual a crowd as you can throw together in Colorado Springs. Period. It's a testimony to her extraordinarily friendly ways. This is a lady who had a way to make you feel good. It's a simply intangible sort of power."

Sandberg's father, Harley, said he is surprised to see the impact his 41-year-old daughter had on many people — andby what he saw at her memorial service the next night: "We were expecting a small room with a few people, maybe 20 to 30 people, but there was this huge cathedral-like place, and it was full," he said.

Hundreds of people gathered in Shove Chapel to say goodbye.

Child No. 8

Jocelyn Sandberg grew up in Ojai, Calif., a town northwest of Los Angeles known as an artists colony. She was the eighth of Harley and Evalyn Sandberg's nine kids. "She was a very sweet girl, very kindhearted," said Tim Sandberg, one of her five brothers. She also was one of the more gregarious, standing up for others.

Tim Sandberg said the family lived in a huge house with a lot of big trees — an ideal place for children. But, he added, "You can imagine 11 people milling around a house — it's a ticket for madness."

Jocelyn Sandberg

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Church — the Mormon faith — was a big part of the family's life, Tim Sandberg said. Harley and Evalyn Sandberg moved to Salt Lake City when the children were grown.

In the years after high school, Jocelyn's jobs were many and varied: She worked for the Ventura, Calif., Parks and Recreation Department; for Sears, repairing washers and dryers; as a baker; and as a buyer of wholesale organic produce. Jocelyn's father said she moved to Colorado Springs in the late 1980s.

Jocelyn was good about keeping in touch with her family — she had siblings in Utah, California, Washington state and Ohio. Her roommate, Flannery Hysjulien, said Jocelyn had something for the mail carrier almost daily — either cards for nieces and nephews

the air that she took on something she didn't know much about," Valdes said.

In the mid-1990s, Sandberg moved to Ohio, where she worked for a time at radio station WCBE-FM in Columbus. Dan Mushalko, who worked with her from 1994 to 1996, said Sandberg was passionate about fighting for what she believed in. In fact, he credits her for turning him into a stronger advocate for his own kids' show.

"She, in all honesty, was one of the best, if not the best, of the music hosts that we've had," he said. "It's very hard when you're doing an eclectic format to find someone who can be masterful of the different genres out there. It was wonderful to listen to her shows, because the radio wave was like canvas to her, and she just painted with sound."

inmates at the Limon Correctional Facility. It also came with a typed letter: "Here in the Big House, we enjoy a few privileges that include a radio and an FM antenna perched high upon a communications tower. . . . Joslyn (sic) will be missed, and we wish the best for those who knew and loved her."

'We just sat there and cried'

Poor Richard's was like a second home to Sandberg. She'd toss pizza and talk with customers at the same time. Or roll up a couple hundred dough balls while she danced. She put her baking skills to work by inventing the recipe for the Poor Richard's pizza crust.

"I had a sketchy recipe a salesman had given me," said City Councilman Richard Skorman, who owns the restaurant. Jocelyn, he said, "came up with some really

organizer, said she was looking forward to Sandberg's input. "She was very direct. She told you what she thought, and I really appreciate that quality when I'm working with people," Cremonesi said.

When Sandberg felt strongly about something, she spoke her mind. "She was completely vegan," said January Powner, a Poor Richard's co-worker. "She would always be preaching to me about that." Through Sandberg's example, a teen-age boy who works at the restaurant also became a vegan. Sandberg called him her "vegan brother" and gave him pamphlets that claimed stockyard animals are mistreated.

On the afternoon of April 26, just hours after learning of Jocelyn's death, Skorman closed Poor Richard's. The staff got through the lunch rush and put a note on the door, saying they were shutting early because of an emergency. A dozen or so workers and some of Jocelyn's friends sat sharing their grief. Then they went for a walk, stopping at a downtown florist. They made their way back to the spot where Jocelyn was found and left their flowers.

"We just sat there and cried," said Pam Hartman, who works at Poor Richard's and whose son is the Sandberg-inspired vegan.

The next night, Saturday, Skorman invited Sandberg's parents and some of her friends to the restaurant for pizza. Jocelyn had worked at the restaurant earlier

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Jocelyn was good about keeping in touch with her family — she had siblings in Utah, California, Washington state and Ohio. Her roommate, Flannery Hysjulien, said Jocelyn had something for the mail carrier almost daily — either cards for nieces and nephews or CDs to mail to friends. In letters to her parents, she'd sign off as "No. 8."

Her mom and dad last saw her over Christmas, which she spent with them in Salt Lake.

On the morning of April 26, Evalyn Sandberg's 78th birthday, two police officers knocked at her door.

"I'll bet," she said to the officers, "you're going to give me a birthday present I don't want."

From listener to music host

Valdes, KRCC's operations director, remembers hearing of Jocelyn Sandberg before she started working at the station — when she was just a listener. Early one morning sometime in 1989 — Valdes can't remember exactly when — he arrived at work to find someone had dropped off baked goods for the overnight deejay. When Valdes asked where they had come from, he was told "the baker chick dropped them off."

"She was a total stranger with no connection other than she had a radio," Valdes said. Soon enough, Sandberg was volunteering at the station, seeking a DJ slot, willing to approach a new-age show head-on. "She was so desperate to get on the air that she took on something she didn't know much about," Valdes said.

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After she had quit WCBE, she stayed in Ohio and still would show up at the station on some Saturday mornings with fresh bread from her job at a bakery.

In early 2000, Sandberg moved back to Colorado Springs and returned to work at KRCC. At the time of her death, aside from being on the air, Sandberg was the station's operations manager, in charge of training and scheduling.

In her small upstairs office at KRCC, notes about upcoming concerts were penciled into her calendar and on scraps of paper. Sandberg was able to score all sorts of concert tickets through her job — a perk she took advantage of. When a friend offered her an '89 red Geo Metro that needed a host of fixes, she took it. "She only wanted that car for one reason," Valdes said. "To go to concerts."

In the past week, cards and e-mails have poured in to KRCC — expressions of sympathy for someone people had often heard but never seen. "This is a box of cards that we've gotten since yesterday," Valdes said Wednesday, plopping a stack of condolences on a table at KRCC. "Most of these are from people who have never met her."

One card was signed by a dozen inmates at the Limon Correctional Facility. It also came with a typed letter: "Here in the Big House, we enjoy a few privileges that include a radio and an FM antenna perched high upon a communications tower. . . . Joslyn (sic) will be missed, and we wish the best for those who knew and loved her."

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"I had a sketchy recipe a salesman had given me," said City Councilman Richard Skorman, who owns the restaurant. Jocelyn, he said, "came up with some really good ideas to keep it thin and chewy."

Her pizza-crust recipe won a Best of the Springs award from The Gazette. It was published April 26.

Skorman said he really got to know Sandberg in 1992, around Amendment 2 time. Sandberg was a shift manager, and Skorman's restaurant was a gathering place for people who opposed the ballot measure, which would have banned laws that protect gays from discrimination based on their sexual orientation. It passed, but was struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court.

"We used to talk about politics a lot," Skorman said. "She was a strong voice urging me to run for City Council. I think she felt I was somebody who could represent people who don't have a voice in local politics."

Last year, Sandberg got involved with the Lavender Film Festival, which showcases films of importance to gays and lesbians. She was excited about going to San Francisco in June to help select some of the films that would be coming to Colorado Springs this year.

Alma Cremonesi, the festival's organizer, said she was looking forward to Sandberg's input. "She was very direct. She told you what she thought, and I really appreciate that quality when I'm working with people," Cremonesi said.

When Sandberg felt strongly about something, she spoke her mind. "She was completely vegan," said January Powner, a Poor Richard's co-worker. "She would always be preaching to me about that." Through Sandberg's example, a teen-age boy who works at the restaurant also became a vegan. Sandberg called him her "vegan brother" and gave him pamphlets that claimed stockyard animals are mistreated.

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The next night, Saturday, Skorman invited Sandberg's parents and some of her friends to the restaurant for pizza. Jocelyn had worked at the restaurant earlier in the week, rolling dough.

"We all sat around a big table," Skorman said, "and ate Jocelyn's pizza."

'I miss her terribly'

Before Sandberg's brother, Tim, left Colorado Springs on Wednesday evening, he went through his sister's CD collection and picked a few. He put on one of her flannel shirts. He also found a treasure: "I unearthed a box of cassette tapes. She has in the past recorded some of her programs to self-critique and to improve her presentation. That's exactly what I wanted."

He wishes he had a recording of the service at Shove Chapel, so the rest of Jocelyn's brothers and sisters would understand how much she meant to so many in Colorado Springs. He hadn't realized it until after she was gone.

"I didn't know her as well as people here knew her," he said. "I feel kind of cheated because of that. I have big regrets that I didn't come here and visit with her when she was alive.

"I love my sister, and I miss her terribly."

That night, he drove out of town, toward Salt Lake, in an '89 red Geo Metro.